OBSERVATIONS

On a PAPER Intituled,

The Declaration of the Lord Petre

Upon his Death, touching the PLOT:

In a LETTER to His Most Sacred MAJESTY.

BEING

A Full Answer thereunto.

WHether the Above-mentioned Paper were drawn up, or so much as ever seen, Considered, or Signed by the late Lord *Petre*, there is much Reason to doubt; As 1. Because 'tis dropt into the World *Unattested*, and it can scarce be supposed but if that Lord of his own free motion had a mind to have made any such *Solemn Declaration*, he would have desired the Presence of the Honourable the Lieutenant of the *Tower*, or the Reverend Dr. *Hawkins*, or some other good Protestants that they might have been able to Testify it to be his proper Voluntary Act. 2dly, Whereas it purports to be Adress'd to his Majesty, 'tis yet Printed neither by His Majesties Printers, Nor with any Signification of his Royal Command or Permission (without which to publish a private Letter Directed to His Sacred Majesty, is I conceive highly Presumptuous) 3dly 'Tis only said to be Printed by *T. B.* for *R. Mead*, whereas there is no such known Bookseller; which much Implies that those that Midwiv'd this Declaration into the World, were themselves half either Ashamed or Afraid to Vouch it.

All which being premis'd, and Submitted to the Consideration and Chastisement of Authority, if it should prove a Forgery; since the thing is now publick, & may by the Confidence of its Expressions Inveagle Weak Readers into too good, that is, a most false & groundless opinion, of the Innocency of the Church of *Rome* in Point of Loyalty, which seems to be the Grand Scope of the Pamphlet, I hope it will neither be unsafe nor unseasonable to offer a few modest Remarks upon it. Which that it may more fairly be done, I shall faithfully Recite the whole Paper (in Paragraphs) *Verbatim*.

The Letter.

May it please Your Majesty,

I Give my self the Hopes that your Majesty will pardon this Presumption of a Dying but Dutiful Subject, in giving you the trouble of this short Account and Declaration of my self, by which, in the first place, I offer to God my Hearty Prayers for your Majesties Long Life and happy Reign, with all the Blessings of this Life, and Eternal Happiness of the next.

Observations.

As to these Prayers for His Majesty, I shall only Note, That if this Paper and these Prayers are real, Then this Dying Lord appears not to have been altogether of the same Religion with many Learned and Leading *Roman* Catholick Priests of *Ireland*, (even since his Majesties Reign and happy Restauration) For I find they had great Scruples of Conscience about Praying for his Majesty, Nay utterly denyed to do it? And for Evidence hereof, I shall produce a Witness of their own, No worse man then Father *Peter Walsh* a Franciscan Fryar, who in his Book, Intituled, *The History of the Loyal Formulary*; Printed 1674. Fol. 706. and 707. Assures us, That at their Popish National Synod held at *Dublin* in the year 1666. (the like of which, he says elsewhere they had not held since Q. *Maries* days) He himself propounded this very matter to the Fathers to be Debated, and pray'd a positive Decree in the Point, Saying—*That he knew MANY CHURCH-MEN Omitted to pray in publick, at their Altars for the King, that is, at all Set-times set for his Spiritual Welfare; yea some, for example, Father* Dominick Dempsy *a Franciscan (Esteemed a very Grave and Holy man, and therefore of a Leading Person) and Father* Long *the Jesuite, Asserted, That because the King was out of the* Roman *Catholick Church, it was not Lawful to pray for Him* ATT ALL; *or at least not publickly on any other day in the year than* Good Friday, *nor then in particular for Him, but in General only, that is, forasmuch as he was Comprehended amongst the great Generality of Infidels, or of* Jews, Mahumetans, Pagans *and* Heretickes, *for whom altogether the Church Prayed on* Good-Fryday, *as being Anniversary of that Day wherein our Saviour Dyed for all the Children of* Adam *in general; Nor yet then, or so to pray for Him with-*

out some further Qualification and Restriction of what we should Beg of God, or wish from Heaven to Him, that is, To Pray only for what concern'd the Spiritual Welfare of his Soul, and therefore only to Pray for his Conversion to the Roman Catholick *Church, but not for His Temporal Prosperity in this World, until He be a true Member of the only true Church.*—Thus far the very Words of Father *Walpoles* Testimony of the punctual Doctrine of those Holy Loyal Fathers in this Case. But it seems they were none of my Lord *Petre*'s Confessors; And yet perhaps They might too; For who knows but this Letter was writ on a *Good Fryday?* Since the Publishers have put no Date to it; Which 'tis like was not Omitted but for some special Design, since it might otherwise, (if the Letter were real) be of great use to give his Majesty Satisfaction how near his Death he made it.

The Letter.

I having been now above five Years in Prison, and, what is more grievous to me, lain so long under a False and Injurious Calumny of an Horrid Plot and Design against your Majesties Person and Government, and am now by the Disposition of Gods Providence called into another World, before I could by a publick Tryal make my Innocence appear, I conceiv'd it Necessary for me as an Incumbent Duty I owe to Truth, and my own Innocency, to make this Ensuing Protestation to your Majesty and the whole World; That whereas One Titus Oates *hath maliciously and falsly Sworn, That he saw me Receive a Commission Directed to me from* Johannes Paulus de Oliva, *Constituting me Lieutenant General of an Army, which he Pretended was to Come into England, I Declare in the Presence of the All-seeing God, before whose just Tribunal I am shortly to Appear, That I never saw any such Commission directed to me, or any other person whatsoever, and do firmly Believe there never was any such.*

Observations.

1. Touching my Lord *Petre*'s Guilt or Innocency, I meddle not; He is gone to his place: But this I will say, That the Contrivers of this Letter might however have had more manners than to Call a Legal Impeachment in the Highest Court of Judicature of this Kingdom, *A false and Injurious Calumny.*

2. The Strength of this Protestation as to us, (for how it is in it self true or false, we cannot Determine,) Depends first on the Truth of this Paper's being the Lord *Petre*'s own handy work, which we have already Detected of several Symptomes of Forgery, and till that be better clear'd, it can be of no Force at all; but only to add to the Suspition of his Guilt, if it should prove Forg'd; for Innocence never desires its Friends should invent Shams or Lies for its Reputation, tho' it self be never so much Oppress'd by Calumny. 2dly. Suppose it Real, 'Tis only a Dying Romanists word in his own Case, and wherein the Reputation of his Church is highly Concern'd; And it may be he could not get an Absolution from his Ghostly Father without he sign'd this Paper; And therefore how far the same is to be Credited, any that are acquainted with the Popish Priests Practical Divinity, and the Wicked Tyrannies and Devilish Imposture they dayly Impose on poor Dying Creatures, will soon be able to judge.

3. In this Protest, there seems a Fallacy or Equivocation in the very Words. For he speaks of *Oates*'s having Sworn that He (the Lord *Petre*) received a Commission Constituting him Lieutenant-General of an Army, *which was to come into England*, and protests he never saw any *such* Commission; whereas I believe it will be found *Oats* deposed not of an Army that *was to come into England*, but to be *raised in England*; And besides, as I Remember, *Oats* tells us, That they call'd these Instruments from the Jesuites General, *Patents*. Now this Protester denies not the receiving of any Patent, Letter or Instrument from *Oliva*, but only a *Commission*, which perhaps they will now say it could not be, because *Oliva* has no Legal Power to grant a Commission of that kind.

The Letter.

But of the Folly as well as the Falshood of the Information, the sober part of Mankind as I conceive sufficiently are thus Convinced.

Observations.

This Paragraph smells rank of a Popish Priests Contrivance, being the highest Affront imaginable, since it not only openly Arraigns the Government, the Wisdom, the Justice of the Nation, but in effect proclaims, his Sacred Majesty (*horresco referens*!) several Parliaments, all our Judges, &c. to be all Fools or Madmen. But so far is it from Truth, That any sober men are Convinced of the Folly or falshood of Mr. *Oat*'s Evidence, That it stands still unshaken by all the little Arts the Romanists have used to supplant it, and firm as the Pillars of the Earth (for so is every Truth.) Whereas true it is on the other side all sober men cannot but observe the Numerous Calumnies and Subornations, &c.—Which the Papists have set on foot to Blast *Oats*'s Credit, have been abundantly detected by Providence to their Confusion, and are legible in our Records to all future Generations, as in the Case of *Knox* and *Lane*, &c.—And what need was there of such Hellish Artifices, if their Cause durst have looked Heaven and Truth, and Innocence, in the Face?

But we may rationally make Judgment of the whole Paper by that which follows; For he that will Avouch with the highest Asseverations one Notorious Untruth, cannot expect to be believed in his other Affirmations, by any that are not Bankrupt of Reason, and too prodigal of their Faith.

The Letter.

And as for those Aspersions which the Ignorant and Malicious have thrown upon the Roman Catholick Church *(of which I am, and by the Grace of God do dye a Member) As if Murthering of Kings, and taking up Arms against our Sovereigns, were an Authoriz'd Principle of that Religion, I do knowingly affirm, There is nothing with more Horror detested by the* Catholick Church,

Church, *as being expresly contrary to the Command of our Saviour, and Christian Doctrine; and as such Renounce and detest it, As I do all Plots and Conspiracies against your Sacred Person.*

Observations.

What an Innocent Loyal parcel of Folks would this man perswade us, his Church of *Rome* consists of! Never, alas, was Prince Assassinated, Never Arms taken up by them against their Soveraigns upon the Account of Religion! --Their Church only Excommunicates a Prince, and gives him to the Devil a little, and deposes him from his Crown, if he will not believe and do as she would have Him; And then if any zealous Son of the Church shall think fit to Kill him, this is no Murthering of a King, for neither is the Prince, according to her Doctrine, any longer a King, nor the Act Murther, but doing of Justice on an Enemy to God and the Church. Nor does she allow Subjects to take up Arms against their Soveraigns, only she Absolves them from their Allegiance when she thinks meet, and thenceforwards they cease to be Subjects, and their King to be their Soveraign. --What Sots, what Dolts, what ignorant nay observing Cockscombs does the Author of this Libel fancy us Englishmen to be? Or how could he have the Impudence to Address this Stuff to that Sagacious Majesty, who both by the Works and Perils of his Royal Grandfather; the Rebellion of the *Irish* Papists against his Incomparable Father; by his own Experience, and a thousand Observations, cannot but know, this bold Averment to be either wholly delusive, or utterly false.

For what does this Author mean by his *Roman Catholick Church?* Or by an *Authoriz'd Principle?* If by Church, he intends the Pope, whom they call the *Church Virtual*, and whom all of their Communion are bound to obey; how many Kings has he deposed? how many Assassinations Commanded, Encouraged or Abetted? as against Queen *Elizabeth*, the two last *Henries* of *France*, and King *Charles* the first in *Ireland*, where the Popes Nuntio was in the Head of the Rebels? If by Church, he understands *Councils*, acknowledged by them lawful and general, whom they call the *Church Representative*; They have Justified, approved and Commanded this Deposing Rebellious Doctrine, As the Council of *Lions* and their great *Lateran* Council, held in the year 1215. in which (if they misreckon not) there were no less than 1215. Fathers; where it was Synodically and Categorically Concluded, *The Pope might depose Kings, absolve their Subjects from their Oaths of Allegiance, and give away their Kingdoms.* If by *Authoriz'd Principle*, he means the Dictates of their Canon Law, (the Rule whereby their Church acknowledges to be governed, and holds in a manner equal to Sacred Scripture) there we find the same things asserted. If the Judgment of their most famous Divines, and Casuists in their Books, unreproved, unsentenced, uncondemned, may together with concurrent practises and attempts in Fact, be supposed to be the Voice of their Church, they have avowed and justified all this, as is unanswerably proved by that Judicious Monument of Honour to our Protestant Church, the Reverend Bishop of *Lincolns* Elaborate Treatise on this Subject. Or if you would rather have the Testimony of a Professed Romanist, hear the before-named Father *Walsh* in his Preface, where amongst other lewd Principles, he instances these that follow, *--That the Pope has power to depose Princes, and absolve Subjects, and Command them to raise Arms against their Prince, so deposed, and to pursue them with Fire and Sword to death if they resist; And that whoever Kills any Prince by the Pope Deposed or Excommunicated, Kills not a Lawful Prince, but an Usurping Tyrant, and cannot be said to Murther the Anointed of God, or to Kill his own Prince; And that whoever out of pure zeal to the Roman Church, ventures himself, and dyes in the War against such a Prince, dies a True Martyr of Christ*, &c. *All and every one of these Tenets* (saith Father *Walsh*) *are maintained either in Formal or Vertual Terms not only by many of our most famous and most Classical Authors of all sorts, but by the Roman Bishops themselves.*

Now if all or none of these are enough to declare to us the Sense and Principles of the Roman Church, (wherein our Author says this Lord dies) we must I think for ever despair of finding either what that Church is, or what it maintains.

But here again we meet with another Equivocation--Aspersions (as he calls them) thrown on the *Roman Catholick* Church, of which he knowingly affirms there is nothing more detested by the *Catholick* Church --Very true, but nothing to his purpose; Such Principles are indeed detested by the Catholick Church, that is, by all sincere real Members of Christ; but still 'tis as true, that nothing is more plainly vouched or practised by the Apostatiz'd Politick Brotherhood that call themselves the *Roman* Church, who are indeed Members of Antichrist, and the Synagogue of Satan. And this our Author tacitely acknowledges, by dropping there the word *Roman*, whereon the whole Hing of the Question depended.

Nor is there any thing more absurd than his Suggestion in the following Clause; That his Church detests it as being expresly contrary to the Command of our Saviour, and Christian Doctrine; For is not his Churches denying the Cup to the Laiety, forbidding Priests Marriage, Injoyning Prayer in an Unknown Tongue, and many other Tenets, as expresly contrary to the Command of our Saviour and Christian Doctrine? And yet they are not ashamed not only to practise, but inforce them, under the highest Penalties.

Besides, Our Author makes the Lord only say, That he detests it *as such*; that is, As far as 'tis contrary to Christian Doctrine: But what if with the Popes, the Councils, the numerous Doctors of his Church before-mentioned, he believ'd Killing or Rising in Arms against an Excommunicated Prince, not to be Murthering of a King, or Raising Rebellion against his Soveraign, according to Christs Command, when his (supposed

posed) Vicar requires it, and declares it lawful; Where then is the Kings Safety, or the Papists Loyalty?

The Letter.

Having thus briefly and with all Sincerity of a Dying Man Discharged my Conscience; I shall end where I began, and with my last Breath beg of God to Defend Your Majesty from all Your Enemies, and to Forgive Those who by their Perjuries have Endeavoured to make Me appear to be One: Who am Living and Dying (as in Duty bound, &c.)

Your most Obedient

and Loyal Subject,

W. Petre.

Observations.

As to the Sincerity of this Paper, the Reader may I hope by this time be better able to make a Judgment: And so I take leave of it; Being certain that all good Subjects will joyn in hearty Prayers to GOD, to Defend His Majesty from all His Enemies. And that they will also believe That no Papist that understands his Religion, and is true to it, can ever be a Friend or a Loyal Subject (any longer then the Pope pleases) to a PROTESTANT PRINCE.

Entred According to Order.

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